

**South River Watershed Restoration
Environmental Assessment
South River Field Office
EA # OR-105-00-05**

Date Prepared: April 25, 2002

**Thompson Creek Tree-Lining
Decision Documentation**

Decision:

It is my decision to authorize the felling or pulling of approximately 25 trees into a ¼-mile reach of Thompson Creek in Section 3, T. 30 S., R. 7 W., W.M. The purpose of the placement of the trees is to provide stream structure that will:

- Reduce stream velocity which will aid in preventing stream bank erosion and channel scouring to bedrock, and which will allow for the accumulation of spawning gravels (substrates).
- Promote stream meander and the development of a flood plain.
- Create pool habitat and cover that will provide rearing habitat for juvenile fish.

Rationale for the Decision:

This project was analyzed under Alternative 1, the proposed action, of the South River Watershed Restoration EA. Its implementation will meet the need for supplying large down wood to the stream channel to provide increased aquatic habitat complexity and proper hydrologic function. Alternative 2, the no action alternative, would not accomplish these objectives.

The placement of in-stream structures will not result in any undue environmental degradation. The project is consistent with Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives contained in the ROD/RMP (pp. 19-20). Specifically, the project will aid in the maintenance and restoration of the natural sediment regime; maintenance and restoration of the physical integrity of the aquatic system; maintenance and restoration of water quality necessary to support healthy riparian, aquatic and wetland ecosystems; and maintenance and restoration of habitat.

Surveys for special status and Survey and Manage botanical species have been completed. The results of these surveys were negative. Suitable habitat for the Oregon shoulderband snail is not present, and no surveys are required. Individual trees selected for felling, and those trees with the potential to be knocked down during felling, were inspected for evidence of red tree vole occupation. None were found.

Surveys of the project area over the past two years have not detected any marbled murrelets

occupying the area, and the likelihood of their presence is considered remote. The potential still exists that they may be present in proximity, though. In order to reduce the potential for disturbance, daily operational restrictions will be in effect during the period from April 1 to August 5. Operations on the project will not commence until two hours after sunrise, and must cease two hours before sunset. With the application of these restrictions, the project is considered “not likely to adversely affect” murrelets.

There is an historic northern spotted owl activity center overlapping the project area. Surveys have been conducted to determine if nesting has occurred, and if so, where the pair is located. The pair has been located in Section 34½, T. 29 S., R. 7 W., W.M., over a ½-mile from the project site, but are not nesting. As a consequence, the project will have no effect for disturbance to nesting owls. The project is considered a “may affect, likely to adversely affect” action for habitat modification. The lack of nesting activity lifts the requirement that the project be seasonally restricted until after September 30th. If the project is not implemented this year, surveys will be required next year to determine the location of the pair and whether or not they are nesting.

No incidental take of murrelets or owls is anticipated. The conclusions of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are contained in the *Biological Opinion for the Thompson Creek Large Wood Enhancement Project* (1-15-02-F-294), dated March 15, 2002.

Thompson Creek provides spawning and rearing habitat for the Oregon Coast coho salmon, listed as a Federally-threatened species. The effects of placement of in-stream structures on the coho salmon and designated critical habitat are primarily derived from sediment generated by stream bank disturbance and in-stream activities associated with the project. These effects are considered “likely to adversely affect” coho and designated critical habitat. Effects on Essential Fish Habitat are considered substantively the same. The BLM consulted this determination with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The NMFS findings are addressed in the August 8, 2001, Programmatic Biological and Conference Opinion for Programmatic Activities Affecting SONC Coho Salmon, OC Coho Salmon, and OC Steelhead. The opinion sets forth Terms and Conditions in conjunction with authorization of Incidental Take. This project is consistent with the terms and conditions of the Programmatic Biological and Conference Opinion.

No issues were identified by other State or Federal agencies, or by any tribal governments. The EA and Finding of No Significant Impact were made available for public review from June 28, 2000, through July 28, 2000. Comments were received from one organization. These comments did not constitute new information or issues not already considered and addressed in the South River Watershed Restoration EA, the ROD/RMP, or the Roseburg District *Proposed Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement*.

Compliance and Monitoring:

Monitoring will be done in accordance with implementation monitoring objectives and

requirements for Riparian Reserves, Water and Soils, Wildlife Habitat, Fish Habitat, and Special Status and SEIS Special Attention Species Habitat resources contained in the ROD/RMP, Appendix I (pp. 190-191, and 195-199).

Protest and Appeals Procedures:

As outlined in 43 CFR § 5003 Administrative Remedies, protests may be filed with the authorized officer within 15 days of the publication date of the Decision Notice in the Roseburg, Oregon, *The News-Review*.

E. Dwight Fielder
Field Manager
South River Field Office

Date